IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information for a business entity using a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system, said method comprising:

receiving CA information relating to the business entity at the server from a client system;

creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes at least a business entity level, an organization level, a site level, a department level and a building level;

storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units, wherein the CA information includes CA tasks to be performed and a responsible person assigned to each task at business unit included within each level within the hierarchy of business units;

cross-referencing CA information;

updating the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information;

displaying on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database;

processing at the server an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system;

providing CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units <u>including providing the CA tasks and the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit</u>;

notifying users electronically of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines;

tracking the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance;

determining at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager; and

generating a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.

2. (currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units further comprises:

~~creating within the database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes business entity, organization, site, department and building; and~~

storing CA information within the database based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable ~~by the~~ <u>in response to a selected</u> business entity <u>included within the business entity level</u>, or by ~~an~~ <u>a selected</u> organization ~~which is~~ included within the ~~business entity~~ <u>organization level corresponding to the selected business entity</u>, or by

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a selected site which is included within ~~an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the site level corresponding to the selected organization, or by a selected department which is included within ~~a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the department level corresponding to the selected site, or by a selected building ~~which is included within a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ that is included within the building level corresponding to the selected department.

3. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein cross-referencing CA information further comprises compiling a user schedule using CA information regarding tasks being performed.

4. (cancelled)

5. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein providing CA information comprises:

displaying information to a user identifying at least one of a site location and a CA task to be performed at a site location; and

receiving an inquiry from the client system regarding at least one of a site location and a CA task to be performed at a site location.

6. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein providing CA information comprises:

displaying information on the client system regarding at least one of a site location, CA calendar, CA audit tracking system, CA audit tool, and CA contacts information; and

receiving an inquiry from the client system regarding at least one of a site location, CA calendar, CA audit tracking system, CA audit tool, and CA contacts information.

7. (cancelled)

8. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein providing CA information comprises providing business information, organizational information, site information, assigned contact person information, COE/department information, building information, CA audit tracking information, CA task information, CA calendar information, CA task reminder information, frequency of reminder information, environmental information, health and safety information, quality information, legal information, human resources information, management information, and corporate compliance information.

9. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein notifying users comprises transmitting an electronic message to the client system from the server system notifying at least one user of a CA task to be performed and a CA audit tracking task to be performed.

10. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising connecting the client system and the server system via a network that includes one of a wide area network, a local area network, an intranet and the Internet.

11. (currently amended) A method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information for a business entity using a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database, at least one managerial user system, and at least one client system, said method comprising:

receiving CA information relating to the business entity at the server from a client system, said CA information comprising site information including environmental information, health and safety information, legal information, corporate compliance information, and contacts information;

creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes at least a business entity level, an organization level, a site level, a department level and a building level;

storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of

business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units, wherein the CA information includes CA tasks to be performed and a responsible person assigned to each task at each business unit in each level within the hierarchy of business units;

cross-referencing CA information;

updating the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information;

displaying on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database;

processing at the server an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system;

providing CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units including providing the CA tasks and the responsible person assigned to each CA task for a selected level within the hierarchy of business units;

notifying users electronically of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines;

tracking the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance;

determining at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager; and

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generating a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.

12. (currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units further comprises: ~~creating within the database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes business entity, organization, site, department and building; and~~ storing CA information within the database based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable ~~by the~~ in response to a selected business entity included within the business entity level, or by ~~an~~ a selected organization ~~which is~~ included within the ~~business entity~~ organization level corresponding to the selected business entity, or by a selected site which is included within ~~an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the site level corresponding to the selected organization, or by a selected department which is included within ~~a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the department level corresponding to the selected site, or by a selected building ~~which is included within a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ that is included within the building level corresponding to the selected department.

13. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein processing at the server comprises using the audit tool to process the CA information to assure compliance with certain laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies.

14. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein notifying users comprises transmitting an electronic message to the client system from the server system notifying the user of the CA tasks to be performed within a time period shown on the CA calendar such that compliance with certain laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies relating to certain topics including at least environment, health and safety, quality, legal, and corporate compliance is assured.

15. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein providing an electronic report comprises transmitting an electronic report to the managerial user system from the server system comprising a summary of the CA tasks performed at a site location for a time period shown on the CA calendar such that managerial oversight of the CA information is facilitated and compliance with certain laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies relating to certain topics including at least one of environment, health and safety, quality, legal, and corporate compliance is assured.

16. (currently amended) A method for manipulating CA information for a business entity using a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system, said method comprising:

receiving CA information relating to the business entity at the server comprising business information, organizational information, site information, assigned contact person information, COE/department information, building information, CA audit tracking information, CA task information, CA calendar information, CA task reminder information, frequency of reminder information, environmental information, health and safety information, quality information, legal information, human resources information, management information, and corporate compliance information;

creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity, the hierarchy of business units including at least a business entity level, an organization level, a site level, a department level and a building level;

storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of entities business units, wherein the CA information includes a responsible person assigned to each task at each business unit of each level within the hierarchy of business units;

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updating the centralized database with CA information comprising adding and deleting information so as to revise existing CA information including at least one of CA task information, CA calendar information, and CA audit tracking information;

displaying on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database;

processing at the server an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system;

providing CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included with the hierarchy of business units <u>including providing the CA tasks and the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit</u>;

notifying ~~users~~ <u>the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit</u> of CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines comprising transmitting an electronic message to the client system from the server system notifying the ~~user~~ <u>responsible person</u> of a CA task to be performed;

determining at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager; and

transmitting a CA task summary report to the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.

17. (currently amended) A network based system for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information for a business entity, said system comprising:

a client system comprising a browser;

a centralized database for storing information;

a server system configured to be coupled to said client system and said database, said server system further configured to:

receive CA information relating to the business entity from the client system;

create within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity, the hierarchy of business units including at least a business entity level, an organization level, a site level, a department level and a building level;

store CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units, wherein the CA information includes a responsible person assigned to each task at each level of the hierarchy of business units;

cross-reference CA information;

update the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information;

display on the client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database;

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process an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system;

provide CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units including providing the CA tasks and the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit;

notify users electronically the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines;

tracking the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance;

determine at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager; and

transmit a CA task summary report to the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.

18. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said client system further comprises at least one of:

a displaying component for displaying at least one of a pull-down list, a check box, and hypertext link options relating to CA audit tracking information and CA scheduling information;

a sending component to send an inquiry to the server system so that the server system can process and download the requested information to the client system;

a collection component for collecting CA information from users into the centralized database;

a tracking component for tracking CA information;

a displaying component for displaying CA information on at least one site location;

a receiving component for receiving an inquiry from the client system regarding at least one of business information, organizational information, site information, assigned contact person information, COE/department information, building information, CA audit tracking information, CA task information, CA calendar information, CA task reminder information, frequency of reminder information, environmental information, health and safety information, quality information, legal information, human resources information, management information, and corporate compliance information;

an accessing component for accessing the centralized database and causing the retrieved information to be displayed on the client system; and

a notifying component for electronically notifying users of CA tasks and CA deadlines.

19. (cancelled)

20. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said server system further comprises a processing component for searching and processing received inquiries against the database containing information collected by the collection component, and for cross-referencing at least one of CA calendar information, CA task information, and CA audit tracking information.

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

23. (currently amended) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said server system is further configured to~

~~create within the database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes business entity, organization, site, department and building; and~~

store CA information within the database based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable ~~by the~~ in response to a selected business entity included within the business entity level, or by ~~an~~ a selected organization ~~which is~~ included within the ~~business entity~~ organization level corresponding to the selected business entity, or by a selected site which is included within ~~an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the site level corresponding to the selected organization, or by a selected department which is included within ~~a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the department level corresponding to the selected site, or by a selected building ~~which is included within a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ that is included within the building level corresponding to the selected department.

24. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said server system further comprises at least one of a receiving component that receives information directly through the client system, and a receiving component that receives information in a pre-determined format established for inputting CA information.

25. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said server system further comprises a cross-referencing component that accomplishes at least one of:

compiling a user schedule using CA information regarding CA tasks being performed;

creating a user CA calendar based on previously created user CA calendars; and

creating a user CA calendar based on changes in CA audit tracking information.

26. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said server system further comprises a notifying component that notifies a user through at least one of transmitting an electronic message to the client system regarding a CA task to be performed, and transmitting an electronic message to the client system regarding a CA audit tracking task to be performed.

27. (currently amended) A network based system for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information for a business entity, said system comprising:

a client system comprising a browser;

a managerial user system comprising a browser;

a centralized database for storing information;

a server system configured to be coupled to said client system, said managerial user system, and said database, said server system further configured to:

receive CA information relating to the business entity from the client system, said CA information comprising site information including environmental information, health and safety information, legal information, corporate compliance information, and contact information;

create within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes at least the business entity level, an organization level, a site level, a department level and a building level;

store CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units, wherein the CA information includes a responsible person assigned to each task at each business unit included within each level of the hierarchy of business units;

cross-reference CA information;

update the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information;

display on the client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the

audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database;

process an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system;

provide CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units including providing the CA tasks and the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit;

notify users electronically of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines;

track the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance;

determine at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager; and

provide an electronic report of the CA tasks to be performed and the CA deadlines to the managerial user system, wherein the report displays active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for each of the plurality of locations assigned to the manager.

28. (currently amended) A system in accordance with Claim 27 wherein the server system is further configured to:

~~create within the database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes business entity, organization, site, department and building; and~~

store CA information within the database based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable ~~by the~~ in response to a selected business entity

included within the business entity level, or by ~~an~~ a selected organization ~~which is~~ included within the ~~business entity~~ organization level corresponding to the selected business entity, or by a selected site which is included within ~~an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the site level corresponding to the selected organization, or by a selected department which is included within ~~a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the department level corresponding to the selected site, or by a selected building ~~which is included within a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ that is included within the building level corresponding to the selected department.

29. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 27 wherein said server system further comprises a receiving component that receives an inquiry from the client system regarding certain topics including at least one of environment, health and safety, quality, legal, and corporate compliance.

30. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 27 wherein said server system further comprises a processing component that cross-references CA information with the CA audit tool to assure compliance with certain laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies.

31. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 27 wherein said server system further comprises a notifying component that notifies users by transmitting an electronic message to the client system from the server system regarding a CA task to be performed within a time period shown on the CA calendar such that compliance with certain laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies relating to certain topics including at least environment, health and safety, quality, legal, and corporate compliance is assured.

32. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 27 wherein said server system further comprises a providing component that provides an electronic report to the managerial user system by transmitting an electronic report to the managerial user system from the server system summarizing the CA tasks performed at a site location for a time period shown on the CA calendar such that managerial oversight of the CA information is facilitated and compliance with

certain laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies relating to certain topics including at least one of environment, health and safety, quality, legal, and corporate compliance is assured.

33. (currently amended) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information for a business entity, said program comprising a code segment that receives CA information relating to the business entity and then:

maintains a database by adding, deleting and updating CA information ;

creates within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes at least the business entity level, an organization level, a site level, a department level and a building level;

stores CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units, wherein the CA information includes a responsible person assigned to each task at each business unit at each level within the hierarchy of business units;

displays on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from a plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database;

processes an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system;

provides CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units;

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notifies users of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines including providing the CA tasks and the responsible person assigned to each CA task for the selected business unit;

tracks the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance;

determines at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager; and

generates a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for a plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.

34. (original) A computer program in accordance with Claim 33 further comprising a code segment that provides at least one of:

an option to filter CA calendars based on at least one of site information, CA task type, assigned contact person, and time frame;

an option to filter CA audit tracking system based on at least one of site information, CA task type, assigned contact person, and time frame; and

an option to filter CA audit tool system based on at least one of site information, CA task type, assigned contact person, and time frame.

35. (currently amended) A computer program in accordance with Claim 33 further comprising a code segment that ~~creates within the database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes business entity, organization, site, department and building; and~~ stores CA information within the database based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable ~~by the~~ in response to a selected business entity included within the business entity level, or by an

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a selected organization ~~which is~~ included within the ~~business entity~~ organization level corresponding to the selected business entity, or by a selected site which is included within ~~an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the site level corresponding to the selected organization, or by a selected department which is included within ~~a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ the department level corresponding to the selected site, or by a selected building ~~which is included within a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity~~ that is included within the building level corresponding to the selected department.

36. (original) A computer program in accordance with Claim 33 further comprising:

a code segment that accesses said database;

a code segment that searches said database in response to an inquiry;

a code segment that retrieves information from said database;

a code segment that causes retrieved information to be displayed on a client system;

a code segment that notifies a user of CA tasks and CA deadlines; and

a code segment that causes a report summarizing the CA tasks and the CA deadlines for a site location to be displayed on a managerial user system.

37. (cancelled)

38. (original) A computer program in accordance with Claim 33 further comprising a code segment that cross-references said CA calendar when a CA task is performed.

39. (original) A computer program in accordance with Claim 33 further comprising a code segment that cross-references said CA calendar to at least one previously created CA calendar when CA information is received.

40. (original) A computer program in accordance with Claim 33 further comprising a code segment that cross-references said CA calendar with said CA audit tracking system information.

41. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein displaying on a client system the audit tool option further comprises displaying topical categories on the client system wherein each of the predetermined audit checklists are organized within one of the topical categories, wherein the topical categories including environmental, health and safety, transportation, and construction safety.

42. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 41 wherein displaying on a client system the audit tool option further comprises enabling the user to select a topical category to display each of the predetermined audit checklists organized within the selected topical category.

43. (new) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein storing CA information further comprises:

storing within the database, for each level of the hierarchy of business units, a responsible person assigned to each task, wherein the responsible person for a given CA task may be different at each level of the hierarchy of business units.

44. (new) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein storing CA information further comprises:

storing within the database, for each level of the hierarchy of business units, a responsible person assigned to each task, wherein the responsible person for a given CA task may be different at each level of the hierarchy of business units.

45. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein the CA information may include a different responsible person assigned to each task at different levels of the hierarchy of business units.